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THE
KOOTENAY DISTRICT.

In directing attention to the following articles, members of Parliament are reminded that a similar Bill was before the House in 1890, promoted by practically the same persons and in the same interest. It was considered by the Railway Committee on the 4th of March of that year, and almost unanimously rejected on the ground that it was not in the public interest.

Since that time the Columbia and Kootenay Railway, extending from Nelson, at the outlet of Kootenay Lake, to Robson, on the Columbia River, a distance of twenty-eight miles, has been constructed, affording communication by steamboat and rail to an area embracing many thousand square miles, covering perhaps the most important mining district in British Columbia, and providing facilities for the transportation of passengers, products of the mines and supplies by way of Revelstoke, where smelting works have been erected.

Further extensions are contemplated. A survey is in progress for a line from Revelstoke, on the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, to the head of Arrow Lake, for the purpose of improving the present means of communication, and a survey for a line through the Crow's Nest Pass eastward is also being made—all being in the direction of preserving this highly important section of the country for Canada and Canadian interests.

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THE KOOTENAY DISTRICT.

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(From Montreal Gazette, March 24, 1892.)

The development of the Kootenay district in British Columbia, one of the richest mineral sections of the whole continent, is proceeding apace. Prospectors, men of experience and capital, and adventurous spirits from the Eastern provinces, as well as from the neighboring country, are flocking in and taking possession of the land, in the confident expectation of witnessing there a rapid output of mineral wealth such as made Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Washington Territory so attractive. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the ever-watchful Americans should cast a longing eye on the Canadian El Dorado and set about devising means by which the riches of the mines of Kootenay can be made to contribute to the benefit of the United States. To this end application is now being made to the Dominion Parliament for the incorporation of the Nelson and Fort Sheppard Railway Company, with power to construct a line from the southern boundary of British Columbia to Kootenay lake at or near the town of Nelson. This scheme is not new; on the contrary it is one that has been thoroughly considered and almost unanimously rejected by Parliament. Two years ago the project was brought forward under the auspices of the Spokane Falls and Northern Railway Company, which applied for two separate charters, one from the southern boundary of British Columbia to Nelson, the other from Nelson westward to the coast. This latter line was suspected at the time to be merely a decoy to secure the support of British Columbians, who properly regarded with disfavor the tapping of the Kootenay trade by a Southern railway in the interest of American cities and American

transportation lines; and accordingly the Legislature of the Province sent a strong protest to Ottawa against the passage of the bills, unless both roads were begun simultaneously and adequate security given for the construction of the line westward from Nelson to coast. The promoters declined to comply with these fair conditions, and accordingly Parliament rejected their application.

In the bill now before Parliament, that of the Nelson & Fort Sheppard Railway Company, the object of the promoters to divert the trade and traffic of Kootenay to American channels is not sought to be disguised under pretence of its being part of a line to the coast, and it is, therefore, to be hoped that the bill will meet the fate of its predecessors. The only change in the circumstances to-day, as compared with two years ago, is that the development of this great mining district has meanwhile proceeded vigorously, and that an important transportation link, connecting the Kootenay lakes and the Arrow lakes, a distance of about thirty miles, has since been constructed for the purpose of facilitating the shipment of ores and of retaining the trade to Canadian cities. By its means the eastern and western water boundaries of the Kootenay division have been connected and ready communication given through the Upper and Lower Arrow lakes with a point thirty miles from Revelstoke on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Besides Canadian railways and Canadian labor at the smelting works, Canadian coal mines are interested in keeping hold of this rich territory, as, if they are once shut out, and the smelting of the ore is done at Spokane, the history of the Kootenay district is too likely to be a repetition of that of the Silver Islet mines on Lake Superior, once

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the richest and most productive in the eastern part of North America, and which have been exhausted without leaving Canada a thousand dollars the richer.

It is interesting in this connection to recall the opinions of the British Columbia press when two years ago an identical measure to that now before Parliament was introduced. The Vancouver *Advertiser* spoke of it as "an attempt to mislead the Dominion and Provincial Parliaments, and to betray the permanent interests of British Columbia," adding that "it will be judicious to scrutinize very closely any schemes that may be projected in the future with which any of the promoters of the coast line of the British Columbia Southern Railway are found to be connected." We may say that the promoters of the present bill are practically the same as those who stood behind the projects of two years ago. The Vancouver *World* referred to the scheme as one "to divert traffic from the natural route to the seaboard, by way of the Fraser River Valley, to American channels, and remarked that "neither Government should think for a moment of granting a charter to any company whose policy it would be to divert traffic from our own country." The Victoria *Colonist* represented that "if the South Kootenay Railway was built, all the trade of that rich mining country would find its way into the State of Washington, and that instead of Canadians building up cities in a foreign country, our legislation should tend rather to aid in establishing large mining centres in British Columbia." In the face of these facts, therefore, there is no doubt that Parliament will best serve Canadian interests by again refusing to incorporate a company having for its object the diversion of a valuable traffic from our own people to those of the United States.

A RAILWAY SCHEME

(From the Ottawa Citizen, March 25, 1892.)

The fabulous mineral wealth of British Columbia has lately begun to attract wide and increasing attention upon the part not only of scientific men and prospectors, but also of intelligent observers in all countries. The article of Julian Ralph upon "Canada's Eldorado," which recently appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, was a symptom of this interest, and the publication of articles of similar import in every quarter of the United States, and in English journals as well, is making the Pacific province more observed at the present time than almost any other part of the Dominion.

Our American cousins, as usual, have their eyes upon the region which is the home of so much undeveloped riches, and are making bold attempts to obtain prior possession of the more accessible districts, and to make them tributary to American commerce. One of the schemes by which it is hoped to effect this end is the Nelson and Fort Sheppard Railway, for the construction of which a company has been formed and is applying to parliament for a charter. The object of this company is to build a road from the boundary line between Canada and the United States to Kootenay Lake at or near the town of Nelson. A similar project was brought before parliament two years ago by the Spokane Falls and Northern railway company, which applied for charters for two lines, one following the same course as the road under consideration, and the other running from Nelson to the coast. The provincial legislature petitioned against those schemes and they were thrown out; it is sincerely to be hoped that the bill now before parliament will meet with a similar fate.

THE KOOTENAY DISTRICT.

The Kootenay district, which the Nelson and Fort Sheppard railway is meant to tap, is one of the richest not only in British Columbia, but in the world. Within the past two years a strong impetus has been given to mining in that section, and population is rapidly pouring in. The existing means of ingress are these: the traveller takes a steamer at Revelstoke, a point upon the C. P. R., proceeds down the Columbia river to Nelson; thence he travels to Kootenay by rail, a small line, thirty miles in length, having been recently constructed there by the C. P. R. The Canadian Pacific, in fact, is pushing forward with its accustomed vigor to open up the country. Not satisfied with the short line above mentioned, it is already engaged in supplying the missing link between Revelstoke and Nelson, so as to dispense with the water trip down the Columbia river. More important still, our great Canadian company is about to construct

a branch line from Lethbridge through the Crow's Nest pass to Kootenay.

Sir John Macdonald's objection to the former application of the Americans was that if their request were granted the trade of that district would be diverted into American channels, the supplies for the mines being imported from Spokane Falls, and the product of the mines sent out of the country by that route. Canada has spent too many millions upon the Canadian Pacific Railway, and upon the opening up and development of the West, to allow such a game to be successful. In many respects we have in past times been dilatory and foolishly compliant in dealing with our American neighbors. It is to be hoped that in the present instance, and in every similar transaction hereafter, effectual measures will be taken to prevent foreigners from exploiting our resources, and coming in to reap the benefit of our national and private enterprise.